

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1917.

CONGRESS IS ASKING FACTS ABOUT THESE GUNS

U. S. IS USING MANY TYPES IN TRAINING OUR SOLDIERS

Out of the crash of world war have emerged many engines of death. Some of them burst without warning upon an astounded civilization. Others—although in cruder form—barked back to the conflicts of a century ago, wherein their basic principles were born. Yet each new weapon, whether it embodied a new discovery or whether it was merely an improvement upon something gone before, makes use of some destructive force which has been tried out, and its qualities established, during three years of fighting under conditions which are the most extraordinary ever known to man.

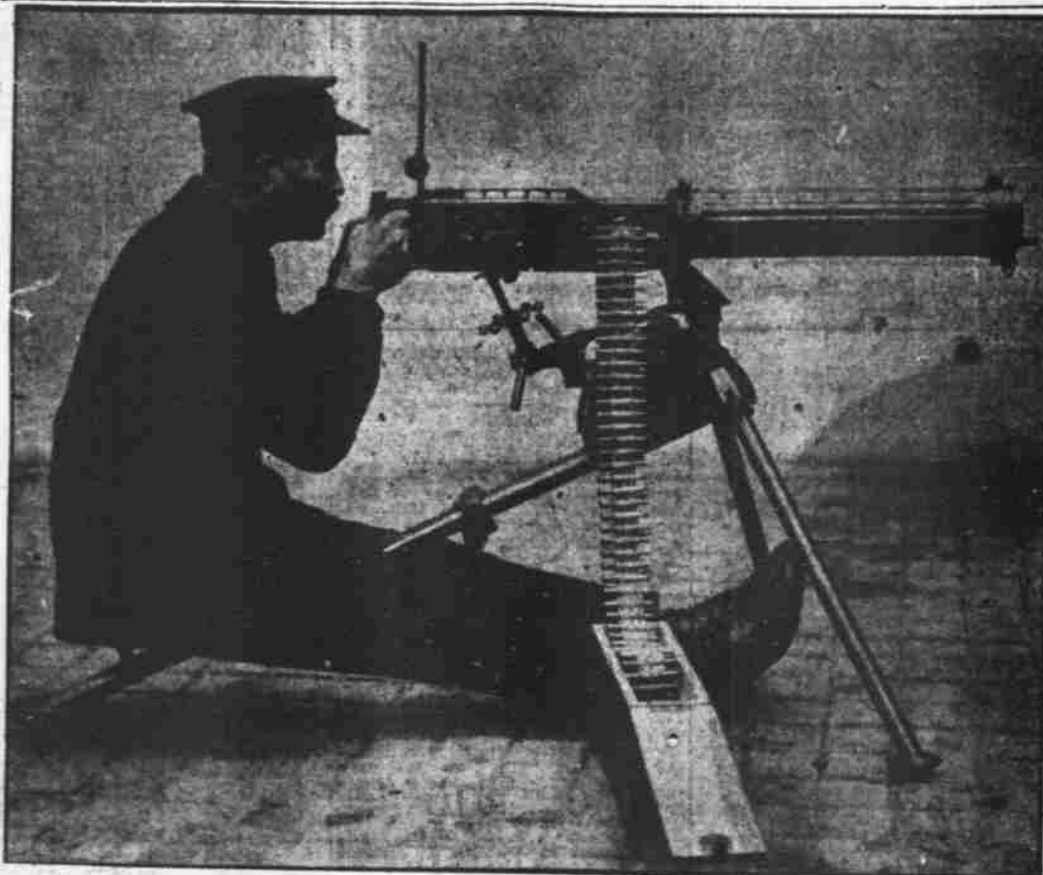
To the armaments of belligerent armies, the wars of a thousand years have contributed. To what precedent has taught the professional warriors of the world has been added the products of the genius of a dozen nations. And from the sum total, the United States Government has been permitted to pick and choose the equipment of our overseas army—machine guns, rifles, side arms, light and heavy artillery—every piece of small and large ordnance of a national army division.

From a score of improved machine guns we have chosen the Vickers-Maxim—recoil-operated, gas-operated, light, intermediate and light—which will send swarms of steel-jacketed bullets at the rate of 600 a minute into the ranks of German soldiers.

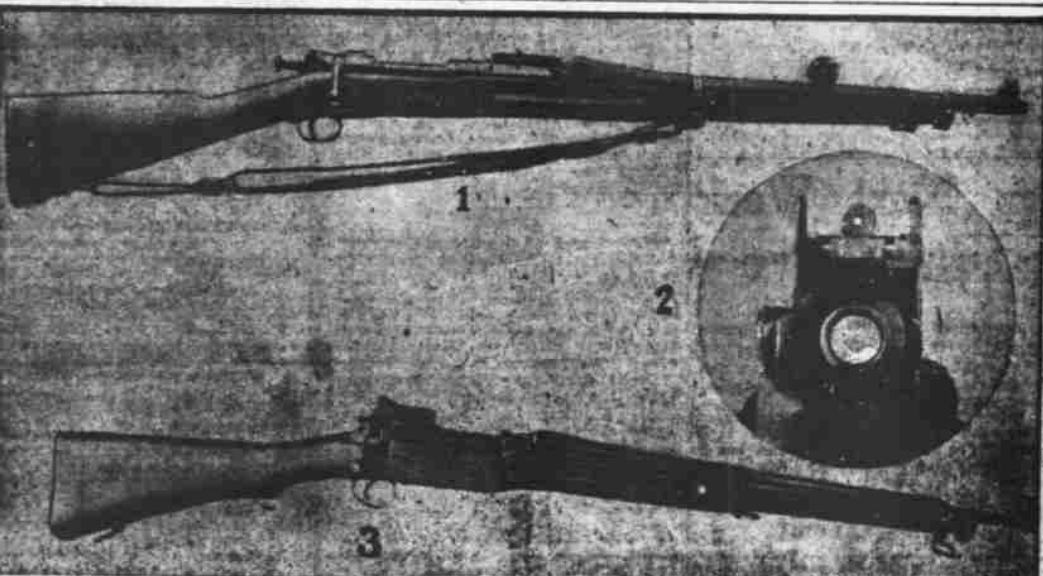
Used By British.
For repelling attacks on trenches and for fixed base work, the United States selected from the equipment of the allies the heavy Vickers-Maxim, a gun used by the British, and, in some modified form by all of the belligerents. To this type of gun the army has added one which is the product of American genius—the Browning.

For the intermediate type—a gun easily mobile yet adapted to fixed base use, the Lewis gun was chosen. This is the gun which was offered to the United States, rejected, and then taken up by the nations of Europe, who dubbed it "The Belgian Rattle-snake."

For the light type of machine gun the United States has chosen an Amer-



The Vickers-Maxim—a British gun—has been chosen for use on tripods or fixed bases. It typifies the recoil-operated principle. It is fed from a belt which holds 250 cartridges. A heavy waterjacket surrounds the barrel and prevents overheating.



Top—The United States Springfield, which is known as the finest military weapon in the world. Bottom—The "United States Model 1917," obtained by modifying the British service rifle to take Springfield ammunition. In the circle—The excellent "receiver sight" of the Model 1917 rifle, which makes aiming easy and does away with eyestrain.

ican weapon—the "light" Browning, which is very different from the heavier type of the same name, and which can be fired from the shoulder, in much the same manner as a rifle is used. To the light Browning, an emergency light weapon has been added. It is the Chauchat, the gun by which the Frenchman swears. When it came to selecting a rifle for the United States soldier, the Government found that it could obtain no better than our own service weapon, the Springfield, which is internationally known as the best military rifle in the world.

Took Emergency Gun.

But face to face with the fact that our Government arsenals could not produce the required number of Springfields, and that to equip commercial plants to do the work would result in a disastrous delay, the War Department was forced to choose from the rifles in use on European battlefields, an emergency weapon. The emergency rifle was found in the British rifle model of 1914, which, remodeled to take Springfield ammunition, is now officially known as the United States Rifle, Model 1917, and erroneously spoken of as "The United States Enfield."

Whether an army sent against the foe of the United States is properly equipped is of vital interest to the nation. That is why the sixteen United States Senators, who comprise the Committee on Military Affairs of the Upper Branch, have for the past week been cross-examining scores of experts—army officers and manufacturers alike—in an effort to determine

whether the men in our overseas forces have been given the proper tools with which to carry on that "seven-tenths of a soldier's business" which is done with rifle and machine gun.

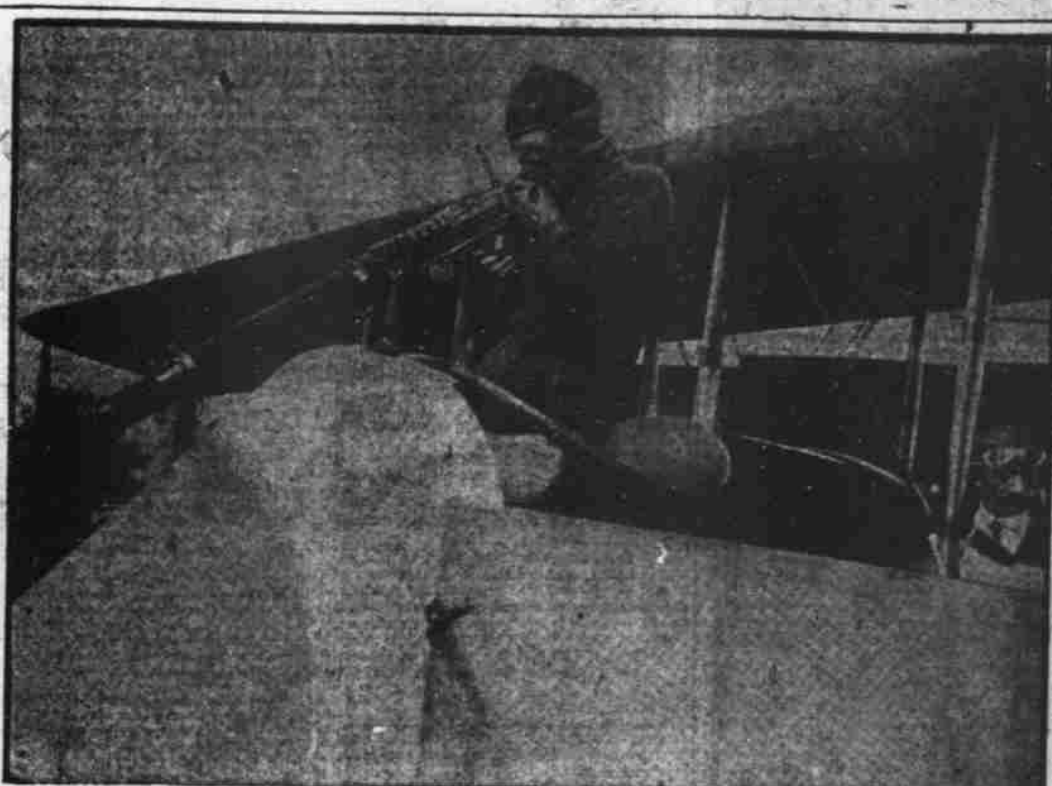
And there is no part of a soldier's equipment which holds for the folks back home the fascination and interest exerted by the weapons upon which the soldier's life may depend. That is why the published reports of the hearings of the committee charged with making a survey of the conduct of the war, are being read in every home where the service flag hangs in the front window.

Slightly Confused.

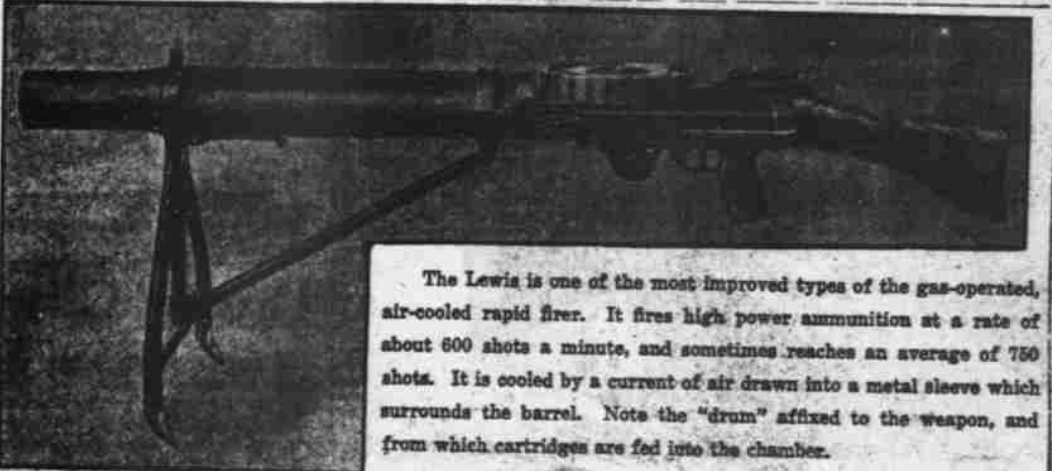
But talk of Vickers-Maxims, Lewis's, Brownings, air-cooled, water-cooled, recoil-operated, gas-operated, light, heavy and intermediate types, as well as of Springfields and Enfields is apt to be a bit confusing to the layman. But all confusion can easily be cleared up with a bit of machine gun history and a few words about the rifles with which the national army will be equipped.

First as to the little rapid firers—A machine gun is in no respect a cannon. It is just what its name indicates—a weapon built as nearly as possible like a rifle, but firing at a rate which varies in different types from 300 to 750 shots a minute; so of the term "machine gun" or more properly "machine rifle" simply means that the weapon is a rifle which is not operated by hand, but by intricate mechanism. Usually the ammunition used in machine guns is

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The Lewis gun, chosen as the intermediate type of rapid firer, will be used upon the nation's battle planes. This gun for the past three years has been the principal weapon of the British aviators.



The Lewis is one of the most improved types of the gas-operated, air-cooled rapid firer. It fires high power ammunition at a rate of about 600 shots a minute, and sometimes reaches an average of 750 shots. It is cooled by a current of air drawn into a metal sleeve which surrounds the barrel. Note the "drum" affixed to the weapon, and from which cartridges are fed into the chamber.

the same as that used in the rifles of the nation for whose army the machine gun is made. The bullets fired from modern machine guns, in use terms easily understood by the layman, are customarily slightly less than 1-8 of an inch in diameter at the base, about 1 inch long, and taper sharply to a point.

As early as the thirteenth century, some long-forgotten Chinese ballistics fan in the land where gunpowder is believed to have originated, conceived the idea of mounting four barrels upon a large wooden frame, and of firing them simultaneously by applying tinder to the touch-holes. That weapon, captured by the French in 1800, is believed to have been the first machine gun.

From then on down through the ages many attempts were made to develop rapid-fire guns, including the cannon of Louis XII, which fired fifty shots at once, but it was not until 1854 that an American, Henry Bessemer, discovered one of the two great modern principles of machine-gun operation—the utilization of part of the gas which escapes from the powder to throw open the breech of the gun, eject the empty shell, load in a fresh one, and close the breech. Twenty-seven years later Hiram Maxim, another American, who was destined later to become an English peer, discovered the second great principle of machine-gun operation—the utilization of the force of recoil imparted by the cartridge to do the same work which Bessemer accomplished by the use of escaping gas.

Guns Are Different.
While the machine guns with which the United States army will be equipped are vastly different from the early models developed by Maxim and Bessemer, every machine gun of the present falls either into the gas-operated or the recoil-operated class.

Each of these classes may be divided into subclasses, according to the system used in cooling the barrel of the weapon, which, without some such device, would be put out of business by overheating; and so machine guns are also spoken of as being air-cooled or water-cooled.

A third distinction is made according to the weight of the gun, and machine guns are spoken of as being of light, intermediate or heavy type. The heavy type may either be gas-operated or recoil-operated, but it is usually water-cooled. The intermediate and the light type may either be gas or recoil operated, but are usually air-cooled.

The Vickers-Maxim rapid firer, which will be one of the principal heavy machine guns used by the United States forces, by these distinctions

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